

## From the Manager

**A**s we start to move from winter storms to spring storms, it's important for our members to keep safety in mind. During storm outages, many of our members use generators. Generators are useful tools but should always be used safely.

A generator should never be used inside the home or in wet conditions. The greatest dangers generators pose to people are electrocution and carbon monoxide poisoning. A generator should be set up on a dry, even surface under an open canopy-like structure and you should never touch one with wet hands. If a generator needs to be refueled, give it time to cool down to avoid the risk of hot engine parts igniting spilled fuel. Fuel should always be stored in approved containers and away from sources of open flame.

Properly installed whole-home generators can power your home safely in an outage, but you should never attempt to power your house with a portable generator by plugging it into a wall outlet. This causes "back-feeding" and can be extremely dangerous to you, your neighbors and the linemen trying to restore power.

It bears repeating that generators, or any other gasoline, diesel, propane, natural gas or charcoal-burning devices, should not be used indoors. Carbon monoxide (CO) is odorless, and opening doors and using fans will not prevent a potentially lethal buildup. Installing CO alarms or combination CO/fire alarms in each room of your home is an easy way to help protect yourself and your family. Carbon monoxide can quickly incapacitate you, so if you should ever feel sick, dizzy or weak while operating a generator, get to fresh air right away.

Don't forget to be on the lookout for your member number in the center section of this magazine. There

are three member numbers hidden in Clay Electric News. If you find your number and give us a call, you win \$5 off your next bill!



**Matt Conklin**  
*Interim CEO*

### USING A GENERATOR?

#### 8 DANGEROUS MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE

- 1 IN ENCLOSED SPACES**  
Always use it in a well-ventilated area.
- 2 NEAR WINDOWS OR DOORS**  
Place it at least 20 feet away from windows and doors.
- 3 IN A GARAGE**  
Even if the door is up, never use a generator in a garage.
- 4 IN THE ELEMENTS**  
Run it on a dry surface under a canopy-like structure (but not in a carport).
- 5 PLUGGED INTO A WALL OUTLET**  
This can be deadly to you, family members, neighbors or utility workers.
- 6 WITH THE WRONG EXTENSION CORD**  
Use a properly rated cord to plug appliances into a generator.
- 7 WITHOUT CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) TESTERS**  
CO detectors should be on every level of your home (test them monthly).
- 8 IN DISREPAIR**  
Make sure your generator is well-maintained and in good working order.

**LEARN MORE AT:**  
[SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org)

## MEMBER PRIZES

Every month we will have three member numbers hidden throughout Clay Electric News. If you find your member number that corresponds to the one found on the upper right corner of your bill, call our office and identify your number and the page it's on. If correct, you will win a \$5 credit on your next electric bill.



# Be prepared and stay safe

## Storm watches vs. warnings

**A**t any moment, 1,800 thunderstorms occur worldwide, according to the National Weather Service. That is 16 million storms a year. In an average year, 1,200 tornadoes cause 60 to 65 fatalities and 1,500 injuries in the U.S. alone.

To protect yourself, your family and your property from seasonal thunderstorms and tornadoes, you need more than a flashlight and a few cans of food (although they are essential parts of your emergency kit). Beyond the items in your preparedness kit, it is a good idea to fully understand how dangerous storms can be and how to interpret weather alerts to minimize risk.

### Watch versus warning

When bad weather is approaching, people typically turn on the TV, pull up a weather app or look online for information. If you see a severe weather watch or warning, something bad could be heading your way. However, many people do not consider the differences between the two.

A “watch” means there is a significant chance of a severe thunderstorm or tornado. Watch and wait for more information while taking precautionary measures, like unplugging electronics and checking the contents of your emergency preparedness kit.

A “warning” means a severe thunderstorm or tornado has been spotted or seen on radar. The moment you get a warning, take shelter in the safest part of your home, which is usually in your basement or the interior part of your home.

### Thunderstorms

Thunderstorms are some of the most common yet destructive weather events on Earth. Most of the damage comes from flooding caused by heavy rains, lightning strikes and high winds. Some storms also deliver hail and can even

spawn tornadoes. 12726-002 Bad weather systems, such as those that cause thunderstorms, can cause broken windows, extreme water damage, fallen trees, serious fires, downed power lines and more.

Do not ignore the potential hazards of thunderstorms. Keep flashlights or battery-operated lights well supplied with batteries or charge them regularly. Keep a supply of nonperishable food and drinking water on hand. Turn off and unplug electronic equipment to protect it from power surges. Move valuables out of the basement or other locations that may flood. If a power outage occurs, never use a portable generator in your home, enclosed structure or garage. Do not step into a flooded basement or area since the water could be electrified.

### Tornadoes

The central part of the U.S. is sometimes referred to as Tornado Alley because it is the most common geographic location for these disastrous storms. The Great Plains have the perfect environment and climate for severe storm creation. While tornadoes can happen in any month, they are much likelier in the spring and summer than in other seasons. April, May and June have more than twice as many reported tornadoes than any other time of the year.

To stay safe during a tornado, be aware of weather conditions during thunderstorms that could breed tornadoes. Know the best place to shelter both indoors and out, and always protect your head, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

Understanding severe thunderstorm and tornado watches and warnings can help keep you and your family safe. Do not underestimate the potential power of these weather systems. Take steps to protect yourselves and your property before a storm hits. For more information about storm preparedness and electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

# Surge protection 101

A power surge is an unexpected increase in voltage, and it can occur from a variety of sources. Regardless of the cause, power surges can majorly damage electronic devices and equipment in your home. Let's look at common causes of power surges and how you can protect your electronics.

One of the most common causes of a power surge is lightning. Most of us have experienced this during a severe thunderstorm. When lightning strikes an electrical system, the excess current must be channeled somewhere ... unfortunately in many cases, it's sent through a home. Your best bet is to unplug all unused devices and electronics during severe thunderstorms.

Another common cause of power surges is electrical overload. **7956-001** This happens when devices or appliances are plugged into an outlet that can't handle the required amount of voltage, or if multiple devices are plugged into one outlet through an extension cord.

If you're experiencing power surges due to electrical overload, it's time to call a qualified electrician to evaluate your home's circuits and electrical needs.

Faulty wiring in a home can also cause power surges. Damaged or exposed wires can cause spikes in voltage, creating a potentially dangerous situation. If you notice signs of faulty wiring, like visible burns on outlets, buzzing sounds from outlets or frequently tripped circuit breakers, your home may be due for electrical wiring repairs and updates.

Surges can also occur after a power outage. Sometimes, when

electricity is being restored and reconnected, it's common to experience a quick surge in current. Like advice

for a surge caused by lightning, it's best to unplug sensitive electronics during the outage – then wait to plug them back in after power is fully restored.

Aside from unplugging devices when you suspect a power surge, there are two ways you can take additional precautions

to protect electronics in your home.

Point-of-use surge protection devices, like power strips, can protect electronics during most surges. But remember, not all power strips include



surge protection, so read the packaging label carefully before you buy, and don't overload the power strip with too many devices. You can also install specialized electrical outlets that offer additional surge protection. Talk to a trusted electrician to learn more.

Another option is a whole-home surge protector, which can help protect your home from larger, more powerful surges. In most cases, whole-home suppressors are connected to your home's service panel and include features like thermal fuses and notification capabilities that indicate when a device has been impacted by a surge. Whole-home surge protection prices vary based on the size of the home and suppressor. Whole-home suppressors should always be connected by a licensed electrician, so consider the cost of installation as well.

Occasional power surges are inevitable, but by unplugging devices when you think a surge may occur and using additional levels of protection like power strips or whole-home suppressors, you can better safeguard your sensitive electronics and devices.

## Plant Trees Safely

Before you dig, call 811 to locate buried utility lines.

### LOW TREE ZONE

Avoid planting within 20 ft. of power lines. If planting is unavoidable, only plant shrubs and small trees that reach a mature height of 15 ft. or less.

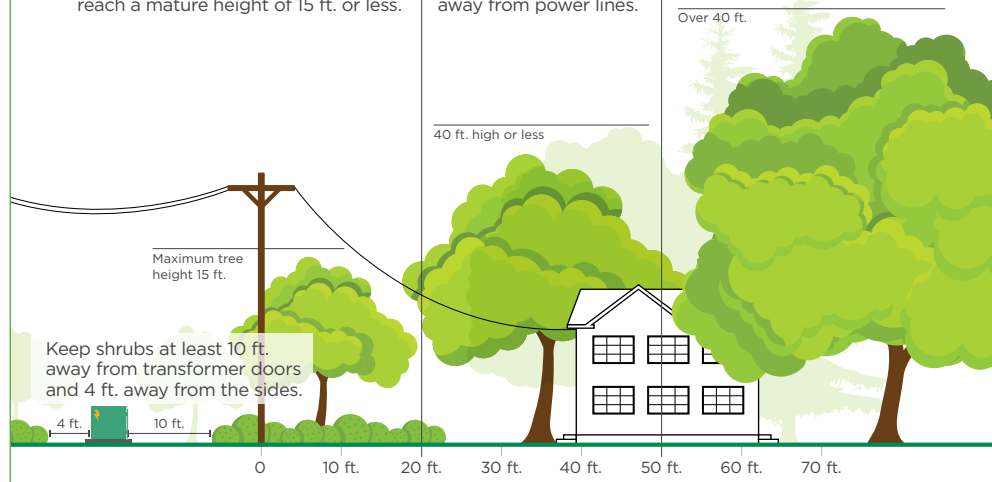
### MEDIUM TREE ZONE

Plant medium trees (under 40 ft. when mature) at least 25 ft. away from power lines.

### LARGE TREE ZONE

Plant large trees (over 40 ft. when mature) at least 50 ft. away from power lines.

Over 40 ft.



# Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting

January 24, 2022

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Clay Electric Co-operative, Inc. (CECI) was held at the Clay Electric Co-operative Headquarters, Flora, Illinois beginning at 5:00 o'clock p.m. on Monday, January 24, 2022.

Trustees present were Kevin Logan, Bob Pierson, Bill Croy, Richard Rudolphi, Frank Czyzewski, Frank Herman and Evan Smith. Neil Gould and Josh Schnepfer were present via conference call. Also present were Matt Conklin, Interim CEO and Tyra Cycholl, Attorney for the Board. The meeting was opened by Bob Pierson, who presided and Neil Gould, acted as secretary thereof.

The invocation was given by Josh Schnepfer and was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

The following proceedings were had [all action being first duly moved and seconded and all action taken being upon the unanimous vote of the Board or without dissenting vote of abstention unless otherwise stated]:

**APPROVED**, the Suggested Agenda.

**APPROVED**, the Consent Agenda including the following:

- **APPROVED**, the prior meeting minutes;
- **APPROVED**, (a) to admit to membership those 13 applicants connected for service since the last such review by the board, and (b) cancel those 16 former members shown on the Manager's Report since the last such review by the Board, said members no longer taking service.

**REVIEWED**, the Consent Agenda including the following:

- **REVIEWED**, the Work Orders;
- **REVIEWED**, the Disbursements;
- **REVIEWED**, the Credit Card Statements;
- **REVIEWED**, the Attorney Retainer;
- **REVIEWED**, the Account Summary Report;

■ **REVIEWED**, the Federated Report from the Board and Federated Workers Compensation Check;

■ **REVIEWED**, the CRC Report from the Board;

■ **REVIEWED**, the NCSC Report from the Board.

**APPROVED**, the Deceased Estates.

**DISCUSSED**, then **APPROVED**, revisions to Policy No. 800-4.

**HEARD**, a report by Matt Conklin regarding the NRECA Regulatory Outlook.

**WERE REMINDED**, the NRECA Annual Meeting is March 4-9 in Nashville.

**HEARD**, a review of SIPC for year ending December 2021.

**HEARD**, a report by Frank Herman regarding the SIPC Financials.

**WERE UPDATED**, on the SIPC Delegates for Annual Meeting of SIPC to be held March 31, 2022.

**HEARD**, a report by Kevin Logan regarding AIEC Meeting.

**WERE ADVISED**, on the AIEC CEO Salary Survey.

**WERE UPDATED**, on Board Training events at AIEC.

**DISCUSSED** the Line Rebuild Contractor Timeline.

At 5:55 p.m. the Board entered into Executive Session. At 6:10 p.m. Matt Conklin left the room. At 6:25 p.m. Tyra Cycholl left the room. At 6:38 Matt Conklin and Tyra Cycholl returned to the room. At 6:38 p.m. the Board exited Executive Session and returned to open meeting. **14918-001**

**HEARD** and **APPROVED**, a financial report by Matt Conklin as to the following:

- Monthly Reconciliation;
- SIPC Power Delivered in December 2021;
- December 2021 Cash Flow;
- Line Loss;
- December 2021 Form 7;
- December 2021 Balance Sheet;
- CRC Dividends Check.

**APPROVED**, the Auditors Letter of Engagement for a three-year term.

**REVIEWED** the Safety Committee Report.

**REVIEWED**, the Monday morning Safety meeting held Jan. 24, 2021.

**HEARD** and **APPROVED**, the Manager's report by Matt Conklin on the following topics.

- CFC Strategic Planning and Cost of Service Study;
- Operations Report;
- Communications Report;
- Upcoming meetings.

**REVIEWED**, the CFC Strategic Planning dates as well of the Cost of Service Study dates.

**REVIEWED**, the Operations Report.

**REVIEWED**, the Communications Report.


**WERE REMINDED**, of upcoming meetings on Feb. 28, 2022 and March 28, 2022 at 5 p.m., and April 25, 2022 and May 23, 2022 at 7 p.m.

**REVIEWED**, thank you card from the Flora Chamber of Commerce.

**RECOGNIZED**, Frank Czyzewski as a Gold Director.

There being no further business to come before the Board, said meeting was declared adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

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